

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



## ON THE HORIZON

- Dec. 3, [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- Dec. 18, Hanukkah begins
- Dec. 25, Christmas Day and Clara Barton's birthday
- Dec. 26, Kwanzaa begins
- Dec. 31, New Year's Eve.



# 57

Disaster responses in November. Clients helped: 172



## MILESTONES

### December

- VICKY JOHNS, 10 years.
- GINGER ROLL, 10 years
- LARAMIE GROATS, 5 years
- KENDAL HAMILTON, 5 years
- CLAUDE ISAACS, 5 years

# A calming force



Anita Jones, of Burley, is a volunteer with the Service to the Armed Forces program. She coaches veterans who are serving time in the Ada County Jail on how to cope with a stressful environment through techniques such as deep breathing and meditation.

## Incarcerated vets get tips on resiliency, dealing with stress

Veterans incarcerated at the Ada County Jail are getting a helping hand from an Idaho Red Cross volunteer thanks to a pilot program launched about a year ago.

Service to the Armed Forces volunteer Anita Jones, of Burley, is teaching these veterans resiliency skills, calming techniques and communications methods they can use to cope with the hardships of incarceration and can also turn to when they are released.

“Incarceration is a really stressful environment,” Anita said. “You can’t communicate with family members, you’re separated from

many of your former supports and it’s an environment where you have very limited control over your living conditions and stressors like lights on 24/7 and noise all the time. There’s a huge need for them to have stress and anxiety reduction skills.”

Anita teaches the classes virtually, sometimes to three veterans at once and at other times to as many as 10. Anita said the stress-reducing techniques like meditation and deep breathing have been well received – so well

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## The gift of time

Want to give the ultimate gift this holiday season? Log into Volunteer Connection and go to the

### [Volunteers Needed](#)

Section (located under MY NHQ) to apply for one of our most needed volunteer roles.

If you have a friend or family member who might be interested in joining the American Red Cross, you can easily submit their name through our [Friends and Family program](#), and a volunteer recruiter will reach out to them.

Thank you for your support of our mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering. Volunteers like you are helping to provide critical support to our communities.

## Friends remember donor with drive

Even after his passing, Curt Stinson’s legacy of giving and public service lives on.

A longtime Red Cross blood donor, the Helena assistant police chief died of cancer in October of 2021. To honor Stinson and encourage others to donate blood, the Helena Police Department hosted a Red Cross blood drive recently.

“Curt was a very good person, and that’s what it takes to be a good police officer,” Helena Chief of Police Brett Petty said. “It starts with a good foundation, good moral beliefs, high integrity. A family guy – he was always doing stuff with his three kids,



and as part of policing you really have to be engaged with the community and he was.”

More than 30 donors, including 10 first-timers, came out to give. They included Curt’s widow, Christine, former Helena Police Chief Steve Hagen, Helena Mayor Wilmot Collins, and of course, fellow police officers.

Stinson donated more than 11 gallons of lifesaving blood through an amazing 92 donations through the years. And just as importantly, he inspired others to give as well.

SEE DRIVE, PAGE 2

# Blood drives need your smile

Join us as a volunteer to provide excellent customer service to enhance the blood donor experience. Also, please listen to a special Red Cross presentation on Idaho Public Radio. Read on to learn more.

## POSITION OF THE MONTH

Engage enthusiastically with blood donors to promote blood donation and set the stage for a long-term commitment to regular blood donations. (Blood drives are during weekdays).

Title: Donor ambassador.

Locations: Needs are in Missoula, Kalispell, Bozeman, Lewis and Clark, Hill, Choteau and Idaho Falls.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Model excellent customer service behaviors. Greet donors, escort as necessary and assist with initial

## IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

intake and handoffs through the blood donation process.

- Ensure blood donors have relevant information and that questions are answered appropriately while creating a favorable impression of the blood donation process.
- Attend to donors in the hospitality area by ensuring that each donor is recognized for his/her contribution and watched for possible adverse physical reactions.
- May make reminder calls, re-schedule donor appointments and

perform follow-up activities as directed.

*Interested?* Contact Sidney Helsten at [IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org) or call/text at 425-238-3349.

## PUBLIC RADIO INTERVIEW

In November, Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon CEO Nicole Sirak Irwin appeared on the Boise State Public Radio program Idaho Matters to talk about our region's plans to add new blood donation centers in Nampa and Twin Falls.



She was joined by Shandra Sterner, a Twin Falls mother who needed 88 units of blood shortly after giving birth to her son.

Listen here: <https://bit.ly/3AULty3>.

# Drive: Legacy of giving continues

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"There's quite a few of us in the department that never donated blood until Curt talked about it or voluntarily pushed us to go and do it," Petty said. "He really brought it to light and the importance of it."

Petty said they hope to turn this year's drive into an annual event that will continue to honor Stinson, who was with the Helena Police Department for almost 26 years.

"He definitely left a legacy," Petty said. "Curt will forever be remembered here at the department, and I believe this is an excellent way to not only honor Curt and his service to the Helena community, but also help those in need of blood donations."

## GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE

Never given blood before? Now's a great time to start. A donation takes less than an hour and can save more than one life. Learn more and find a blood drive near you at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or by calling 800-RED-CROSS.



Curt Stinson's widow, Christine, joined Curt's friends and colleagues in honoring his community spirit. She's pictured here with phlebotomist Erica Gudmundsen.



Helena Mayor Wil-mot Collins, seen here with phlebotomist Cody Walker, donated blood recently at a blood drive honoring the legacy of Curt Stinson, a longtime Red Cross blood donor who died of cancer in 2021. More than 30 donors came out to donate at the Helena drive.

# Cope: Prisoners pass along skills

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

received, the veterans are beginning to pass on what they've learned.

"Staff from Ada County facilities are reporting back that they've witnessed individuals who have taken the classes teaching the skills to other inmates," she said.

Other facilities throughout the region also are considering giving the classes a try, Anita said.

Anita joined the Red Cross in the 1990s as an HIV/AIDS coordinator, where she worked with local health departments to make sure they had the resources and materials they needed.

Retired after a 14-year career as the family court services coordinator with the Idaho Supreme Court and now in private practice, Anita returned to the Red Cross several years ago as a disaster mental health volunteer. She eventually transitioned to the Service to the Armed Forces program.

## JOIN OUR TEAM

The Service to the Armed Forces program provided comfort and care to more than 3,400 Idaho, Montana and East Oregon military families and veterans last year. If you would like to learn more about this program and how you too can get involved, email [IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org)



"I was interested in the trauma and the difficulties I saw with returning military pre- and post-deployment and with their families," she said. "I could see there was a real need for resiliency and skill-building and communications. Because the Red Cross offers that in a supportive environment with the military families it seemed like a good fit." And while her private practice keeps

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It's heartwarming when you see tough guys embracing these kinds of activities.

— Volunteer Anita Jones

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her plenty busy, Anita knows the volunteer work she's doing with veterans going through tough times is extremely important.

"There's such a huge need for mental health services, and I think 'Gosh, I don't know if I have time to volunteer and then I think if not me who?' she said.

"It's heartwarming when you see tough guys embracing these kinds of activities."



Bozeman Chamber of Commerce representatives celebrate the grand opening of the new Red Cross blood donation center in Bozeman recently with staff, supporters, board members, volunteers and members of the public.

# Bozeman center polished, fresh

Montana Red Cross unveiled a new Bozeman Blood Donation Center on Nov. 14 with a grand opening event featuring a ribbon-cutting ceremony, speakers and tours of the facility.

The Bozeman center, 221 E. Oak St., features a fresh new look, which will provide a better donor and volunteer experience, and space for two additional donor beds and more staff. More than 40 people, including a team from the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce, were on hand for the festivities.

Montana Red Cross board members Craig Stahlberg and Mike Augustine emceed the grand opening. Paul Vaughn of Libby spoke about why his family is supporting this Red Cross expansion through a generous gift and talked about why he donates lifesaving blood.

“I have battled depression all my life and have developed a philosophy about how to live life in a way that provides me with meaning and happiness,” Vaughn said. “Giving blood is a compassionate act that helps the giver as well as the receiver and it feels better the more you do it. It reduces suffering and even saves lives, and that feels really good.”

Wren Garverick of Bozeman highlighted the profound impact blood donation has had on her family. Wren’s daughter Bertie needed three blood transfusions in her first few hours of life and is now a happy, healthy toddler.

“It’s not just my life that has been changed by having our daughter with



**Wren Garverick tells the crowd how important blood donations have been to her family.**

us, it’s that whole network of people who love me and were so terrified at that time that she wasn’t going to make it,” Wren said. “Had we not had blood to give Bertie, it’s unthinkable the



impact it would have had on this huge web of people.”

### MORE MONTANA EXPANSION

The Bozeman upgrade is part of a larger Red Cross biomed expansion effort across Montana.

The Red Cross Donor Center and laboratory in Great Falls is also undergoing a major renovation.

To learn more about this expansion campaign and how to get involved, visit [redcross.org/bloodsaveslivesMT](http://redcross.org/bloodsaveslivesMT).

### IDAHO CENTERS COMING

Over the next 18 months, Red Cross is also adding new blood donations centers in Nampa and Twin Falls. The new Nampa center will have 17 donor beds, including six for platelet collection. The Twin Falls facility will have four donor beds.

Learn more about this Idaho expansion here [redcross.org/bloodsaveslivesID](http://redcross.org/bloodsaveslivesID).



Visitors at the grand opening of the Bozeman Blood Donation center recently enjoyed tours and treats.